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RAIL TRAVEL NEWS

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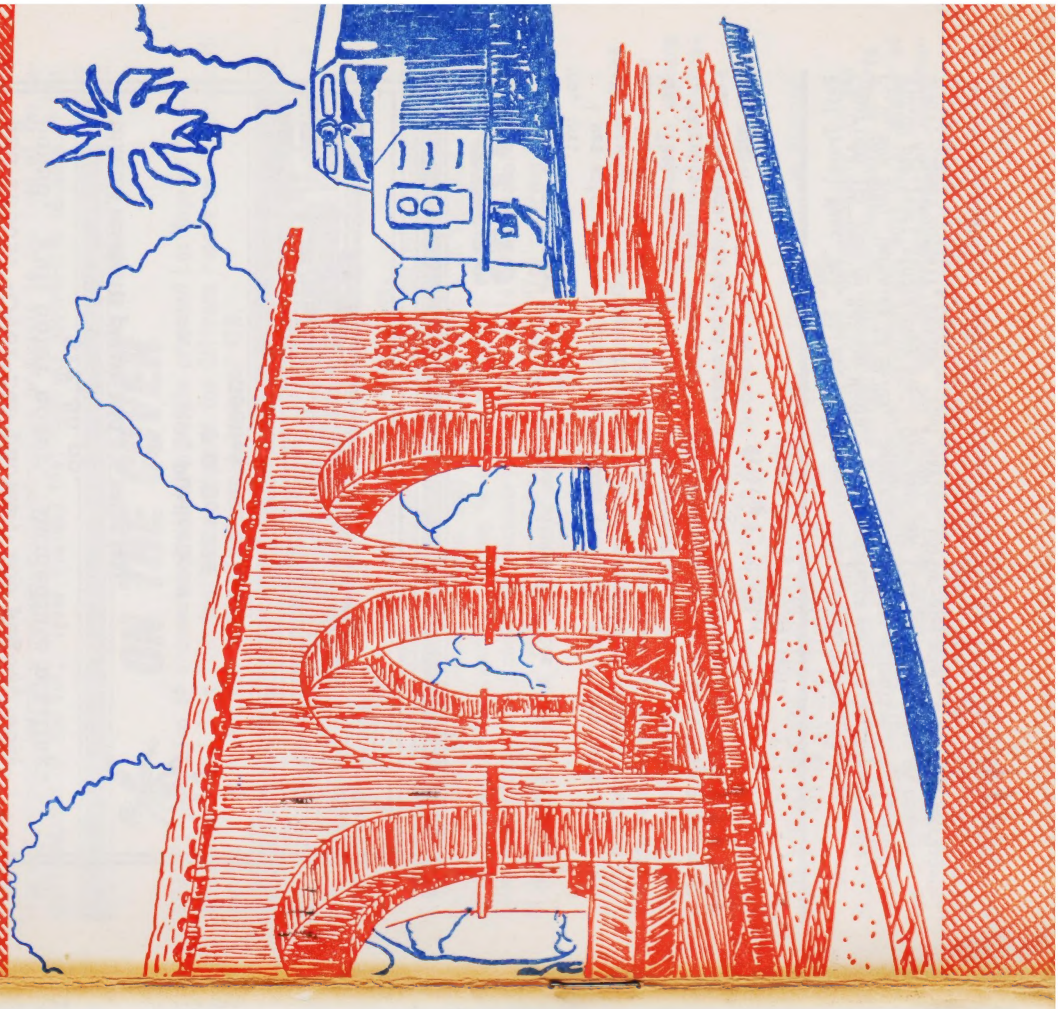

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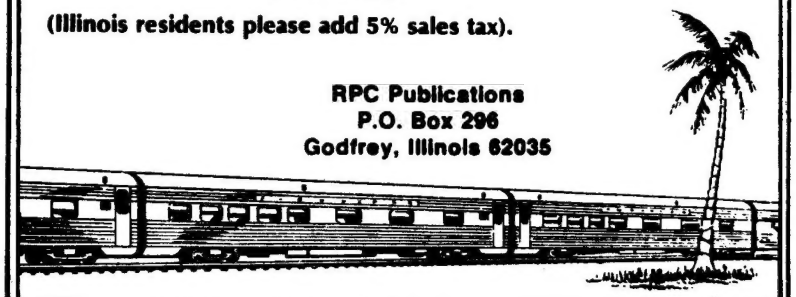

LETTERS

I agree one hundred per cent with "Name withheld" of Los Angeles (LETTERS, RTN no. 197.

I was watching the TV news at noon today (Jan 11). One of the subjects was the big snow they had in Oregon this week. Shots were shown of stranded truck and auto traffic on heavily snow-drifted highways--wires down from being coated with ice. Then the scene shifts to the railroad station. Yes, the only thing running is Amtrak's PIONEER! They carried twice their normal capacity to help people escape the storm. As Railfan magazine might say, "Railfanning is: Watching the rails come out on top once in a while."

William E. Blakslee
Upper Darby, Pennsylvania

Rail Travel News, Vol. 10, No. 2. January, 1980. Whole number 199.

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LETTERS, continued

I feel compelled to take exception to your "report" on the NARP directors' meeting in Denver (RTN #197). Perhaps Dan Monaghan thought we were "conned", but I don't. Senator Melcher's bill was doomed whether or not NARP supported it--a watered-down version of it might have passed--and the issue came down to whether or not we should expend our political capital in support of Melcher, or give up on the route structure fight and go on to other matters. We chose the latter course.

You state that "Bitterness is being directed toward NARP leaders for not taking a stronger stance against the recent cutbacks." How much stronger a stance could we have taken? All the testimony I read and heard from NARP directors, staff and members at and subsequent to the RSPO hearings called for NO cutbacks, and either retention of the existing Amtrak route structure or adoption of the expanded route structure proposed by NARP. Our support for an expanded Amtrak system drew criticism for being a pie-in-the-sky, lines-on-a-map fantasy, so it appears that we are to be raked over the coals no matter what position we take.

In Denver, Clark Tyler gave us a tongue-lashing for NARP's failure to fall into line and support Amtrak's reduced route structure proposals in the face of the assault mounted by the DOT. Tyler claimed that NARP was obstructive because of its support to the very end for a larger system than could be realistically expected to pass Congress. To his everlasting credit, NARP president Jack Martin vehemently defended NARP's position and actions and pointed out that it was largely thru NARP's efforts that many of the proposed cutbacks didn't take place.

Clark Tyler is an extremely shrewd, politically astute, and very persuasive man. He also makes a lot of sense. Those of us who "tilted" in Tyler's direction did so because we thought we sensed a change that might well bring much improved rail passenger service to this country. We may be wrong, but we are willing to help Boyd, Tyler and company bring about the necessary changes to build a high level of service on Amtrak. And we still reserve the right to say to them, "You're wrong."

James C. Clark, Director, NARP Region VII
Galena, Illinois

We doubt that anyone could render fair and objective criticism against the fight that was put up by NARP and its membership against the cutbacks. NARP took a very strong stance against the cutbacks. NARP as an organization and many of its members individually worked unceasingly for over a year to defeat the DOT's proposed emasculation of Amtrak. The fact that a proposed 43% reduction in routes ended up as a 14% reduction is significant testimony to the success of the efforts of NARP and rail passenger supporters everywhere.

We suspect whatever bitterness exists is directed to the fact that we stopped fighting--but we stopped fighting only after the fight was over.

None of us was pleased with the loss of a single train. Unfortunately, it was clear that the Congress would not freeze the system and that our continuing efforts toward a freeze would have been counterproductive. Perhaps the most vocal member of the Congress supporting a freeze by the time of the NARP Directors meeting in Denver was Senator Melcher from Montana. Even in Senator Melcher's case we had been advised that he was uncertain whether he would bring any move to freeze the system to the Senate floor again. He did not.

ON THE COVER

Artist's impression of a commuter train stop on the proposed Los Angeles to San Bernardino line. This illustration accompanied the Caltrans report on the proposed service. The report was covered in the last issue of RTN.

The Board's decision can be fairly characterized as a move to pursue a different approach for the future of rail passenger service and in so doing to close the door on one chapter of the past. Before criticizing the Board's actions, those who would be critical should assess NARP's continuing activity. We are no less vocal and no less active in our continuing fight for improved rail passenger service FOR ALL AMERICANS.

The fight to save Amtrak and to improve the quality of its service can be compared with a battlefield. While it may be conceded that losing any trains meant we fell short of total victory, it is clear that our side took far less casualties than the other side (where is Brock Adams now?). It is important to understand that we took on an administration that was hostile to trains and a Congress that was in a budget-cutting mood. The final result was a larger than ever Amtrak budget, extensive commitment to new equipment and recognition of the need for passenger trains. As in every political battle, we did not get everything we sought, but the bottom line, in my judgment, reflects substantial achievement.

John R. Martin, President, NARP
Washington, D.C.

FEARS ARISE OVER COMPLETION OF SUPERLINER CAR ORDER

Fears have been expressed for some time that Pullman Standard would not complete Amtrak's order for Superliner passenger cars. Those fears were heightened in the last few weeks when Pullman Standard issued a news release along with its annual report that discussed cost overruns on the car order. The car builder has asked Amtrak for more money to complete the order. An Amtrak spokesman said that Amtrak will refuse to pay more. There is a legal binding contract existing, and P-S must adhere to it, Amtrak indicated.

It is reported that the P-S Board of Directors will vote in February on what action to take. There is speculation that P-S might vote to abort the order. At present, the car company is far behind in production of the new passenger cars. Production of Superliner sleeping cars was recently moved to Pullman's South Chicago plant. An observer noted that production of those cars is now "down to zero." It is highly unlikely that Amtrak will have enough Superliners to meet its current tentative timetable for equipping trains other than the EMPIRE BUILDER, which is now running with Superliner equipment. Amtrak's most recent plan calls for equipping the EMPIRE BUILDER for daily service by June 1. Next in order would be the SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, followed by the DESERT WIND about July 1. Then would come the PIONEER on Aug 1, the COAST STARLIGHT Oct 1, the SOUTHWEST LIMITED Nov 1, and the SUNSET LIMITED by Jan, 1981.

Production of the new cars was earlier slowed by many design changes and by a crippling strike at Pullman Standard. An Amtrak spokesman said he was not aware of a threat by P-S to pull out of the order. However, it is known that Amtrak has retained Clark Clifford to assist it in legal questions arising over the order. It is believed that P-S has told Amtrak it will complete the order if Amtrak will agree to increase its payments according to inflation rates in the original contract. Construction delays during the past year have reportedly not been related to the earlier strike nor to design changes made earlier by Amtrak. One problem is that P-S has had difficulty in obtaining enough skilled workers to work on the order. It is speculated that Amtrak is aware of these later problems not related to its own earlier actions, but is unwilling to sue P-S because of the car maker's possible claims that Amtrak slowed production by insisting on many changes and retrofits, and this would put Amtrak in a bad light. Another problem that would

surface in a lawsuit is Amtrak's attitude toward its existing conventional equipment. Amtrak in the past has virtually ignored the urgings by rail supporters to electrify all its conventional equipment and to retain every possible car in order to avoid an equipment shortage. Amtrak frequently claims an equipment shortage exists, but critics point out that if one exists it is of Amtrak's own making. They ask, for example, why Amtrak recently returned passenger cars to Southern Railway instead of keeping them and rebuilding them. (On the agenda of Amtrak's Jan 30 Board meeting are an item on acquisition of Southern Railway cars and on head-end power conversion of ex-Santa Fe Hi-level diners and lounges. These items suggest the possibility that Amtrak is trying to come to grips with a projected shortage of Superliner cars.) It is estimated that Amtrak now has seven Superliner diners. If Superliner production were terminated, Amtrak would be in a difficult position because its diners have the oldest average age of all its cars.

There have been many rumors that the Budd Company or Bombardier in Canada would be willing and able to take over the Superliner order if P-S did not finish it.

The Superliner situation is a very difficult one for Amtrak, and the company is saying only that there is "nothing definite" in the matter. Obviously, if a lawsuit arises, Amtrak needs to play its cards close for the present. But one of the chief concerns of rail supporters is that Amtrak will not act decisively in this case because of a desire to save face, and the consumer will be the ultimate victim.

DETROIT-TOLEDO TRAIN MAY BE STARTED

RTN has been informed by reliable sources that Amtrak and the state of Michigan are working together in an unpublicized action to inaugurate a rail service between Detroit and Toledo. An Amtrak spokesman said that he "didn't know" anything about the matter. According to sources, one Chicago-Detroit roundtrip per day would continue on to Toledo, using tracks of Conrail, and connecting in Toledo with the LAKE SHORE LIMITED. It is not known whether the alleged service would be a 403-b operation or not. At present, the Amtrak map shows only a bus connection between the two cities. There are now three roundtrips daily between Chicago and Detroit. The LAKE SHORE LIMITED eastbound arrives Toledo at 9pm, and westbound at 10:35am. The rail distance between Detroit and Toledo is 56.2 miles.

GUEST EDITORIAL

(The following guest editorial is by an Amtrak employee whose name is being withheld:)

Is there an equipment shortage at Amtrak? The answer is yes and no. Thomas Hackney, Amtrak's Group Vice President - Mechanical, has this philosophy: A car fleet will be maintained in the quantity necessary to cover daily assignments. No extra cars for Christmas, summer, or group moves. He says it is simply too expensive to maintain a lot of cars unless they are used all the time. So, when the shop committee has its weekly meeting, if a conventional, steam-heated car needs shopping, it is most likely to be stored (in L.A., New Orleans, etc.). Therefore, most of the Southern Railway 52-seat coaches have been returned to the railroad and are sitting in Spartanburg, SC.

This car maintenance philosophy means that Amtrak would rather maintain fifty cars in good condition than have 75 cars, some of which are always on the rip track.

I am of the opinion that it is more important to ask the following question: After completing the electrification (HEP) program for trains 19-20, 81-82, and 87-88, does Amtrak plan to continue that program and re-equip trains 60-61, 50-51, 58-59, and 21-22-23-24?

I find Amfleet equipment in long-distance service an abomination. It is simply not properly equipped for such service. It makes for a patchwork service at best. The negatives are well known: 1) inadequate food and beverage service, 2) chemical toilet systems, 3) no baggage storage, 4) small windows. Good quality HEP equipment would be a large step forward for these four trains. At the same time, it would free up at least 80 Amfleet cars for use in filling the requirements of the many 403-b trains which are now lying at Amtrak's doorstep.

A second important question is to ask what Amtrak is planning regarding their new low-level car order. I would hope that the Superliners have taught Amtrak some things: 1) Insist that the cars be delivered as whole trainsets--not 40 coaches, two diners, and lord-knows-when you'll see the lounge cars! 2) Order baggage-dormitory cars. 3) Use Budd Co. specifications for sleeping car accommodations (roomettes, bedrooms and slumber rooms). This will avoid the cheap and poorly-designed hardware which is used in the Superliner sleepers. 4) Use mechanical systems, parts, trucks, designs, etc. that are a known, proven item. Do NOT order an unproven new item just because it's cheaper--example: the Superliner truck. 5) Listen to your own personnel in mechanical and on-board service. They have the experience to know what works and what fails.

My ideal low-level trainset would be the following:

1) one baggage-dorm.
2) five coaches (52-60 seat legrest with large restrooms).
3) one lounge (must have some decent food preparation facilities).
4) one diner (48-seat).
5) one sleeper-lounge (8 slumbercoach rooms and one drawing room).
6) two sleepers (4 roomettes, 6 bedrooms, 4 slumbercoach rooms, one handicapped room and a porter's room).

My ideal trainset's capacity is 250 coach and 69 sleeper. An 11-car train is a good size for two F40 engines. It fits most platforms and water stops. It could serve 325 passengers in one diner and the two lounges described. The drawing room noted in the sleeper-lounge should be a first class room with shower, refrigerator, etc. A very stiff price could be asked. But such a premium accommodation would undoubtedly enjoy almost 100% occupancy, as it did on the SOUTHERN CRESCENT.

One more nagging question--there are 39 Superliner diners and 25 lounges (when they come). To downgrade some trains by putting no lounge car on them is to my mind unthinkable. All of Amtrak's answers to the lack of 14 lounge cars will probably be revolting and shoddy. To use a portion of the diner, the lower level of a coach, or some other patchwork substitution is sad to contemplate.

RAIL CANADA

ADVANCE VIA TIMETABLES effective Feb 3 show trains 2 and 194 operating one hour earlier. Edmonton observers note that one effect of these changes will be the end of catering truck service now available on departure of train 194 at South Edmonton, because the new departure time will be too early. They fear that ridership also will be adversely affected.

EDMONTON-TO-CALGARY train-off case has not yet yielded a decision. Hearings were held in Apr 1979. The belief is that the decision still is pending the provincial government's action to improve service.

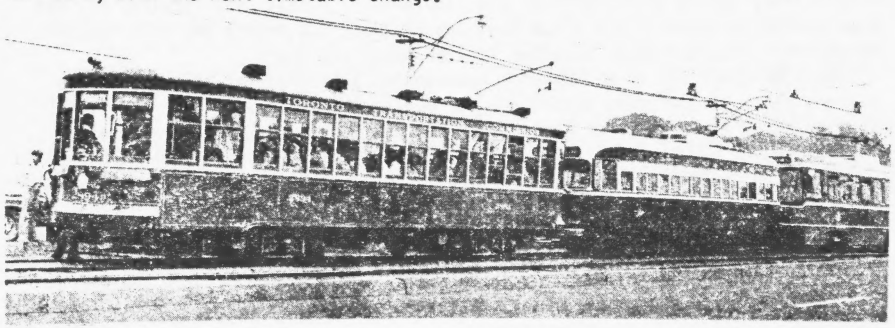
CANADIAN VOTERS GO to the polls again in February. Advance surveys show the opposition Liberals with a strong chance to form a new government. The short-lived minority Conservative government's Transport Minister Don Mazankowski made several key decisions favourable to rail passenger service.

CITY OF SASKATOON is talking with Canadian Pacific officials about having the downtown rail lines relocated so the city can develop more of the land. This would

probably rule out the possibility that the CP downtown station could be used in the future. Transport 2000 had earlier suggested using the station for a Saskatoon-to-Regina city centre-to-city centre service.

INTERCITY BUS INDUSTRY in Ontario and Quebec seems to be in real trouble. Voyageur is worried about traffic stagnation and declining traffic levels, and they blame VIA. Transport 2000 will meet in February with Voyageur's Paul Martin to discuss such problems, and will suggest a study by T2000 on bus industry futures in Central Canada and coordinating bodies in Quebec and perhaps Ontario to coordinate transport policy and operations (intercity), with subsidy of selected operations on bus and rail, with joint terminals, advertising, etc. The Quebec bus operator's association is seeking Quebec Government grants for help in buying new buses, a demand that T2000 supports.

GASPE TRAIN SERVICE is expected to change. Transport 2000, in response to consumer complaints by Gaspe members and by Federal M.P. Bujold, has suggested the revival of the CHALEUR, a former CN separate train to Gaspe. VIA response was lukewarm, but they may have a different plan in the works, that should be known on Feb 3, with the next timetable change.



THESE THREE GENERATIONS of streetcars paraded thru Toronto recently, when CLRC revenue service was inaugurated on the TTC's Long Branch line. This photo, by Ted Wicksom, is from the third (Dec) issue of Trans-Action, now out. (See Express Ads section, p. 22, for information on this Canadian quarterly news publication.)

FEBRUARY 3 ABANDONMENT of Windsor St. Station, Westmount, Montreal West, and Park Ave. Stations in favour of CN Central Station in Montreal will NOT take place. Reasons are that CN did not want the South Shore Montreal-Quebec service to be directed to North Shore CP. The loss of the lucrative Rapidos would be a financial blow to CN. And the new Quebec Government plan for Montreal area "surface metro" apparently needs the CN's Mount-Royal Tunnel.

THE SNOW DROUGHT in Eastern Canada has hurt Ontario ski centres, who will ask the Ontario Government for subsidies. Quebec centres have mostly done fairly well, and LE PETIT TRAIN DU NORD has been doing fairly well too, according to VIA Quebec's Leo Moisan ("The people are riding up and down the line looking for snow.") And they have been finding it at Val-David, Ste-Agathe, and Mt-Tremblant.

QUEBEC CITY AREA changeover from use of the (CP) St-Sacrement Station to Ste-Foy was accomplished smoothly, with publicity handled well by VIA Quebec's consultative committee, including the Mayor of Ste-Foy.

CUSTOMS INSPECTION DELAYS at the Maine border are making the ATLANTIC late every day at Montreal. Observers are predicting a mess when customs and immigration (U.S. and Canada) officials get their hands on Lake Placid Olympics-bound travelers.

VIA RAIL REPORTED recently in an internal news release about the refurbishing program for ex-CP Rail stainless steel cars. The program should be completed by mid-1981. Forty-two cars should have been finished by the end of Dec 1979--inclu-

ling 16 100-series coaches, 8 Chateau- and 10 Manor-type sleepers, and 8 diners. In 1980, 12 more coaches, 11 Chateau- and 22 Manor-type sleepers, and 5 diners are scheduled for this work. In addition, 8 Skyline cars will be converted to head-end feeders, and 10 bag-dorms will become straight baggage cars. Two Skyline cars earlier had cosmetic changes in carpeting and upholstery and are now running on the SAINT-LAURENT between Montreal and Mont-Joli. Besides mechanical and electrical work, the ex-CP cars are getting new carpeting, drapes, blinds, upholstery, arborite, wallpaper, flooring, berth curtains and roomette door drapes. Note that the "Park" cars are not included in the above. Before Christmas, VIA was not using them on the CANADIAN's Montreal-Sudbury leg. Protests from users brought their return, at least over the holidays.

URBAN-SUBURBAN TRANSIT

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CHICAGO'S NORTH WESTERN train station is the subject of an attempt by preservationists to save it from the wreckers. A group designated Friends of North Western Station, headed by railroad employee David Daruszka, is trying to have the threatened building listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The group announced its formation on Jan 16, and can be contacted at 7549 North Oakley, Chicago IL 60645. Donations will be welcomed.

THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT of Transportation on Jan 15 hosted a demonstration of passive wheelchair lifts that Caltrans is testing with the help of local transit operators in four cities--Sacramento, San Francisco, Oakland, and Long Beach. UMTA contributed 80% of the project cost of $335,000.

CHICAGO TRANSIT OFFICIALS in the South Suburban area are continuing efforts to obtain more Highliner commuter cars for the ICG. The state DOT said it has money to buy 75 rail cars, but did not indicate which railroads they would go to. The money is available because of cancellation of the Crosstown Expressway.

MEDINA SHRINE CIRCUS has arranged an RTA/ICG Circus Train on Mar 15. The first 300 residents to apply for tickets by Feb 12 will be able to ride, and will get discounts from circus tickets prices. Free shuttle buses run from the train at Randolph St. Station to the circus.

A "MAGNETIC SMOG" being given off by BART's third rail has been detected by a Stanford University scientist. Low-frequency magnetic radiation from the BART train power source can be detected as far away as the Sierra, said Antony Fraser-Smith. The effects of such radiation on humans have not been well-studied, he said.

AN EXTREME SHORTAGE of MU equipment on Conrail's Gladstone Branch commuter line in New Jersey has recently caused many off-peak runs to use buses as substitutes for trains. A CR conductor aboard the buses collects the fares.

AMTRAK LOOKS AT THE BULLET TRAINS

A condensed version of a talk given by Amtrak President Alan Boyd to the Western Railway Club in Chicago on November 19, 1979.

I have just returned from a two-week visit to Japan, where I had the opportunity to take a hard look at the world's finest rail passenger system: the Shinkansen.

I emphasize the Shinkansen system because that is the most accurate way to describe it and to underscore why it is different. The Shinkansen rolling stock is impressive, but there are very impressive trains in other countries. The Shinkansen right of way, roadbed and track is impressive, but certain passenger rail sections in other countries may be as well designed. The Shinkansen Central Traffic Control, computerization and management are excellent, as they are in other countries. Their maintenance is extraordinarily efficient, and some other countries may match that. It is when you put all of this together into a fully integrated system that you discover, beyond a doubt, the Shinkansen system itself has no equal. It is well-designed, well-organized, well-supported and well-managed...

Fundamental to any good railroad is the track. The Shinkansen track is all new. By this I mean they have constructed a new roadbed with hundreds of miles of viaducts and tunnels, designed a new track structure which is as straight and level as is possible. The gradient never exceeds 15 meters in a thousand, and curvature is limited to a radius of no less than 2500 meters. In fact, all their new roadbed is now designed to a radius of no less than 4000 meters.

As the Shinkansen has developed, they have gone to slab track. Between Osaka and Okayama--a distance of 161 km--they began with 8km slab track. This proved to be so successful for high speed passenger service that they oaid 270km or 68% of the 400km on the next segment of the system. Now all of the new roadbed is prepared for slab track. After riding up and down the system, I can assure you it has been successful. It is a very smooth ride and they cruise at 210 km/h (140mph) easily, comfortably, and in safety. This excellent track is the first and most important building block of the system.

I fully expect we are going to see rail passenger service expand very strongly in this country during the 1980s in the 200-400 mile route segments where population density can support it. This will have to happen because the automobile is an extravagant consumer of gasoline. I do not mean we are going to eliminate the automobile under any circumstances. Our society has been built on the automobile since World War II and the American population has become dispersed. But in this climate rail passenger service will grow and expand.

...Unless we are able to improve the track design and structure so we can produce a service equal to or better than the automobile, any other steps we may take will become virtually irrelevant. This is the first great lesson to be learned from the Japanese experience. They were faced with this same problem back in the mid-50s and they decided to go ahead with an all-new roadbed and high speed track design, and they left their freight and conventional services on the old roadbed.

Next, they began the design and development of the high-speed rolling stock. The Shinkansen cars are large, roomy, quiet and comfortable. They are powered by a remarkable, compact main motor which is mounted in each truck. These small electric motors provide them with excellent traction dispersed throughout the 16-car train. These motors, designed to operate on the two power systems in Japan, are used to accelerate the train, cruise it at the design speed of 210 km/h, and they also provide regenerative braking down to 30 km/h when the compound disc and tread brakes take over. This is a very simple, reliable and low-cost operating system.

While track structure and rolling stock were being readied, a high-speed, computerized Central Traffic Control system was established to monitor all train operations from Tokyo. At peak load times, a train leaves Tokyo every

ding 16 100-series coaches, 8 Chateau- and 10 Manor-type sleepers, and 8 diners. In 1980, 12 more coaches, 11 Chateau- and 22 Manor-type sleepers, and 5 diners are scheduled for this work. In addition, 8 Skyline cars will be converted to head-end feeders, and 10 bag-dorms will become straight baggage cars. Two Skyline cars earlier had cosmetic changes in carpeting and upholstery and are now running on the SAINT-LAURENT between Montreal and Mont-Joli. Besides mechanical and electrical work, the ex-CP cars are getting new carpeting, drapes, blinds, upholstery, arborite, wallpaper, flooring, berth curtains and roomette door drapes. Note that the "Park" cars are not included in the above. Before Christmas, VIA was not using them on the CANADIAN's Montreal-Sudbury leg. Protests from users brought their return, at least over the holidays.

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I have just returned from a two-week visit to Japan, where I had the opportunity to take a hard look at the world's finest rail passenger system: the Shinkansen.

I emphasize the Shinkansen system because that is the most accurate way to describe it and to underscore why it is different. The Shinkansen rolling stock is impressive, but there are very impressive trains in other countries. The Shinkansen right of way, roadbed and track is impressive, but certain passenger rail sections in other countries may be as well designed. The Shinkansen Central Traffic Control, computerization and management are excellent, as they are in other countries. Their maintenance is extraordinarily efficient, and some other countries may match that. It is when you put all of this together into a fully integrated system that you discover, beyond a doubt, the Shinkansen system itself has no equal. It is well-designed, well-organized, well-supported and well-managed...

Fundamental to any good railroad is the track. The Shinkansen track is all new. By this I mean they have constructed a new roadbed with hundreds of miles of viaducts and tunnels, designed a new track structure which is as straight and level as is possible. The gradient never exceeds 15 meters in a thousand, and curvature is limited to a radius of no less than 2500 meters. In fact, all their new roadbed is now designed to a radius of no less than 4000 meters.

As the Shinkansen has developed, they have gone to slab track. Between Osaka and Okayama--a distance of 161 km--they began with 8km slab track. This proved to be so successful for high speed passenger service that they oaid 270km or 68% of the 400km on the next segment of the system. Now all of the new roadbed is prepared for slab track. After riding up and down the system, I can assure you it has been successful. It is a very smooth ride and they cruise at 210 km/h (140mph) easily, comfortably, and in safety. This excellent track is the first and most important building block of the system.

I fully expect we are going to see rail passenger service expand very strongly in this country during the 1980s in the 200-400 mile route segments where population density can support it. This will have to happen because the automobile is an extravagant consumer of gasoline. I do not mean we are going to eliminate the automobile under any circumstances. Our society has been built on the automobile since World War II and the American population has become dispersed. But in this climate rail passenger service will grow and expand.

...Unless we are able to improve the track design and structure so we can produce a service equal to or better than the automobile, any other steps we may take will become virtually irrelevant. This is the first great lesson to be learned from the Japanese experience. They were faced with this same problem back in the mid-50s and they decided to go ahead with an all-new roadbed and high speed track design, and they left their freight and conventional services on the old roadbed.

Next, they began the design and development of the high-speed rolling stock. The Shinkansen cars are large, roomy, quiet and comfortable. They are powered by a remarkable, compact main motor which is mounted in each truck. These small electric motors provide them with excellent traction dispersed throughout the 16-car train. These motors, designed to operate on the two power systems in Japan, are used to accelerate the train, cruise it at the design speed of 210 km/h, and they also provide regenerative braking down to 30 km/h when the compound disc and tread brakes take over. This is a very simple, reliable and low-cost operating system.

While track structure and rolling stock were being readied, a high-speed, computerized Central Traffic Control system was established to monitor all train operations from Tokyo. At peak load times, a train leaves Tokyo every

seven minutes for Osaka.

The success of this system is evident all along the line. The trains run on time. They make precise connections with the many conventional local trains --many of which are run by private operators. They come to a stop precisely at the appointed position, i.e., car 12 stops at the spot where a no. 12 is marked on the platform. And most of all, they run safely. In the 15 years of the Shinkansen operation, they have carried more than 1.4 billion passengers with a perfect safety record.

Production of the 2336 Shinkansen cars, with many more on order for delivery in 1980, has been divided among several major suppliers for the benefit of the industry and to assure the highest standards because of the element of competition. All parts are standard and interchangeable, and the supply pipeline is fully automated.

"As I see our own future, I believe this rather radical, all-out approach of the Shinkansen is going to have to come to this country."

The maintenance process is a work of art. Because all trains are of uniform length, 16 cars equal 400 meters, the shops are at least 400 meters long. A train will pull in for a 30-day inspection and overhaul and will be back in revenue service in 24 hours, with a 2-shift manpower pool. During that time the trucks will be removed and a set of completely overhauled trucks taken from the previous train the day before will be put back in place. The car body goes thru a total inspection and a computer is plugged into the train to check more than 1100 items in the cars and their electrical systems. They leave looking like new. The 90-day inspection even includes complete repainting, in addition to wheel pulling and total re-working of the main motors. After the 90-day work, the train looks as tho it had just come from the factory. Even the seats have been rebuilt and re-cushioned. This is the highest level of large scale maintenance I have ever seen, and it pays off. The passenger gets "Blue Ribbon" service.

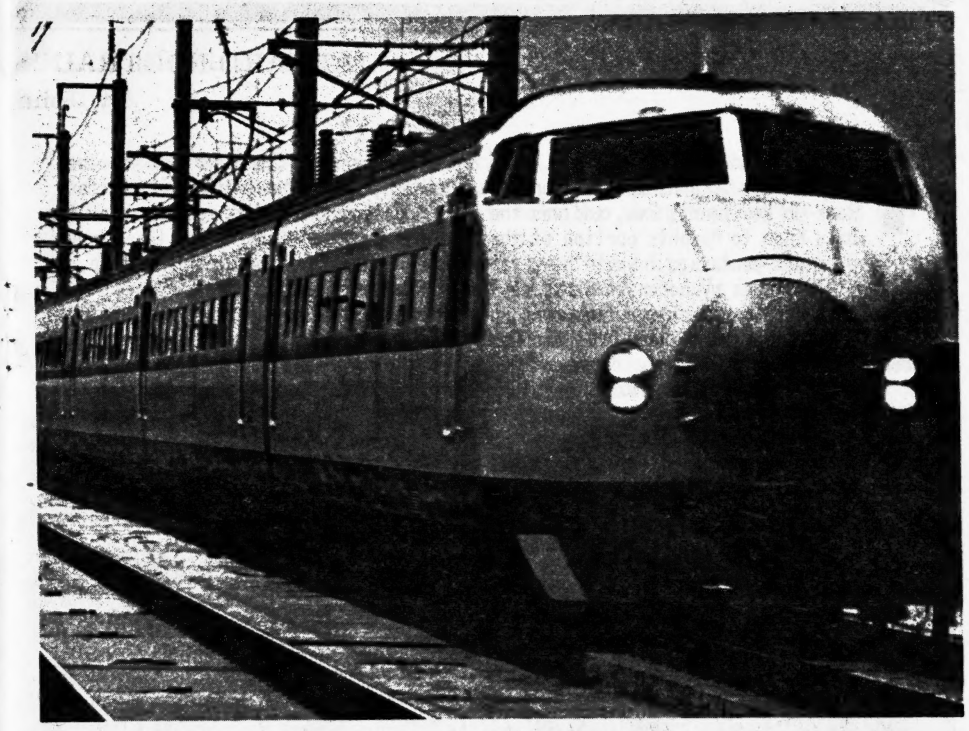
JNR has a 7-car, fully computerized measurement train which travels the entire Shinkansen route on the Hikari (express service) schedule. Instruments on this train read out 16 areas of interest in connection with the track and its condition. This is printed out by the computer and given to the maintenance crews immediately. They know exactly where to work and what to do.

Other instruments in this measurement train read out all electrical information, scan the pantograph and catenary operation and provide a running account of these data. It is this measurement train and its accumulated data which assure top JNR management that the entire system is safe and in good shape.

This is a quick overview of an excellent operation. It is more impressive. I think nothing expresses more vividly the superiority of the rail passenger system than the attitude and dedication of all JNR people, from (President Fumio) Takagi on down to the train and station crews. One example may underscore that point.

When a train arrives at the end of the line in Tokyo after its 100mph run thru Japan, a 97-person crew waits on the platform to clean out the entire train, inspect it and re-supply it for the return trip. This is done on a 28-minute schedule. They allow the passengers 5 minutes to leave the train. That leaves 23 minutes. They allow the passengers 5 minutes to board the train. This leaves only 18 minutes to get the job done. They clean the entire train and work thru it like a swarm of locusts. They leave it spotless and completely re-supplied. It is a minor miracle. The entire Shinkansen is a major miracle of this time.

The bottom line is that JNR provides the service the government requires. In Japan the general public benefits at least equal to the public cost. Most business travel between Tokyo, Nagoya, Osaka and Kyushu is on the reliable and safe Shinkansen. It is worth every cent they pay for it. And the Shinkansen itself makes money and saves the Japanese more than 40 million barrels of crude oil equivalent per year.



Alan Boyd visited Japan at the invitation of Japan National Railways President Fumio Takagi. Mr. Takagi had visited Amtrak in September, and had spoken to key members of the House and Senate.

As I see our own future, I believe this rather radical, all out approach of the Shinkansen is going to have to come to this country. It was Commodore Perry who in March of 1853 first brought the railroad to Japan as a gift from the American people. It is time now to work out a basis for technological transfer of current Japanese experience back to the U.S.A. I am convinced the U.S. government has now reached a decision which will permit us to acquire cars thru the 1980s. It is up to us to begin now to do all the rest of the work to program the system for this new rolling stock. A railroad is not made of cars alone. As I said earlier, the Shinkansen is remarkable because it is a system. We must begin to plan for a similar system.

Now is the time to begin on the 200-400 mile corridors, on radials out of Chicago, in the Texas Triangle of Ft. Worth-Dallas, Houston and San Antonio, in the Northwest, along the east coast of Florida, between San Diego and Los Angeles and others. This is the way we'll have to go with this new technology. This is the wave of the future.

In the United Kingdom, they are achieving considerable success with their new HST fast intercity trains. In Germany, many trains are being upgraded to the 100mph class. In France, they are working on an all-new Paris to Lyon line where they plan to run at speeds up to 155-160mph. In Italy, they are constructing the all-new Direttissima line from Milan to Rome and Naples.

This is the way to go and the Japanese with their 15-year lead time are showing us how successful it can be. Now the ball is in our court and we have been challenged to attack this problem. I believe the American public is ready for the new era of rail passenger service, an era of safe, reliable, comfortable, enjoyable and economical high-speed passenger trains.

ABOARD HOGTRAIN'S SUGAR BOWL SPECIAL

by John A. Mills

The "Sugar Bowl Special" from Little Rock, Arkansas to the Sugar Bowl football game at New Orleans was sponsored by Hogtrain, Inc. The train left Little Rock on New Year's Eve, and was the first passenger train to operate over the Bald Knob to Memphis portion of the Missouri Pacific since 1965.

Five or six years ago I would have said it was impossible to run such a trip. But in 1979 it was my honor to serve as "Train Captain" on this run.

The cooperation of all parties concerned was phenomenal. The people at Hogtrain, Amtrak, Missouri Pacific and Illinois Central Gulf worked as a team to pull off the seemingly impossible.

It was not until after Texas lost to Texas A&M on the first Saturday in December that such a trip was even considered. In fact, the folks at Hogtrain had planned to run some extra cars on the rear of trains 21-22, the INTER-AMERICAN, to Dallas to the Cotton Bowl from Little Rock. Then when Texas A&M upset that apple cart, Arkansas landed in the Sugar Bowl against Alabama.

On Sunday, Dec 30 no less than four F40PH engines and eight cars of the regular INTER-AMERICAN, plus eight cars of the Hogtrain equipment for a total of 16 cars, arrived in Little Rock at 11:15pm. Engines 247 and 319 were taken off the head end of train 21, and the rear eight cars dropped off the train.

Since the football train would head north toward Bald Knob, then to Memphis on the MoPac, the cars for it came south in reverse. Unit 319 became the lead unit, followed by 247, baggage car 1158 (out of Beech Grove on Dec 19 with new Amtrak paint scheme and for use on the electrified LAKE SHORE LIMITED), Amcoaches 21206 and 21111, Amcafe 20031, Amcoach 21117, Amcafe 20012, and Amcoaches 21156 and 21072. Placed on the rear of the train the next day by a MoPac switch crew known as the "Hill Job" was 10-6 sleeper "Cynthia" (ex-NKP, ex-IC), now owned by Hogtrain, Inc.

Special decals were made for each locomotive and each car of the train. A special decal which read "SUGAR BOWL EXPRESS" graced the side of the baggage car between the doors. This baggage car became an all-night disco car with 50,000-watt radio station KAAY providing the music with a stereo system that everyone on the train wanted to own. What sound, what music, what dancing and what fun was had on New Year's Eve in baggage car 1158! Except for a 45-minute break at about 12:30am on January 1 at Memphis, while the locomotives were cut off and taken to the ICG South Yards for servicing and fuel, the revelers danced till 5:00am.

The trip schedule was followed perfectly by both MoPac and ICG. There was not a single delay on the going trip. Returning, a Cotton Belt Blue Streak train got us at Fair Oaks, Arkansas, for about 5 minutes where the MoPac and SSW cross at grade. However, the Hogtrain arrived in Little Rock at 6:05am on Jan 2, 10 minutes ahead of schedule. The train operated as Second 58 northbound from New Orleans to Memphis on the ICG, and otherwise was shown as Extra Hogtrain 319 on the train orders.

I was most concerned about mechanical problems, but there was none at all. The Amfleet toilets were serviced last at St. Louis on Dec 30. There was no place to drop them at Little Rock or anywhere between Little Rock, Memphis and New Orleans. Not one toilet stopped up or overflowed. And not one person complained about the Amfleet windows being too small, the seats being too close together (84-seat cars were used), nor the foot bottom door openers.

Amtrak mechanical forces at New Orleans washed the train and serviced it during the layover at New Orleans between 8:30am and 6pm on New Year's Day. They, too, did an outstanding job. The train left New Orleans at 6pm sharp, and not one person missed the train. Not only was the train beautiful, but the Arkansas fans were great, even in defeat, and losing to National Champions Alabama did not dampen their desire for food and drink on the return trip. Amtrak picked up nearly $5000

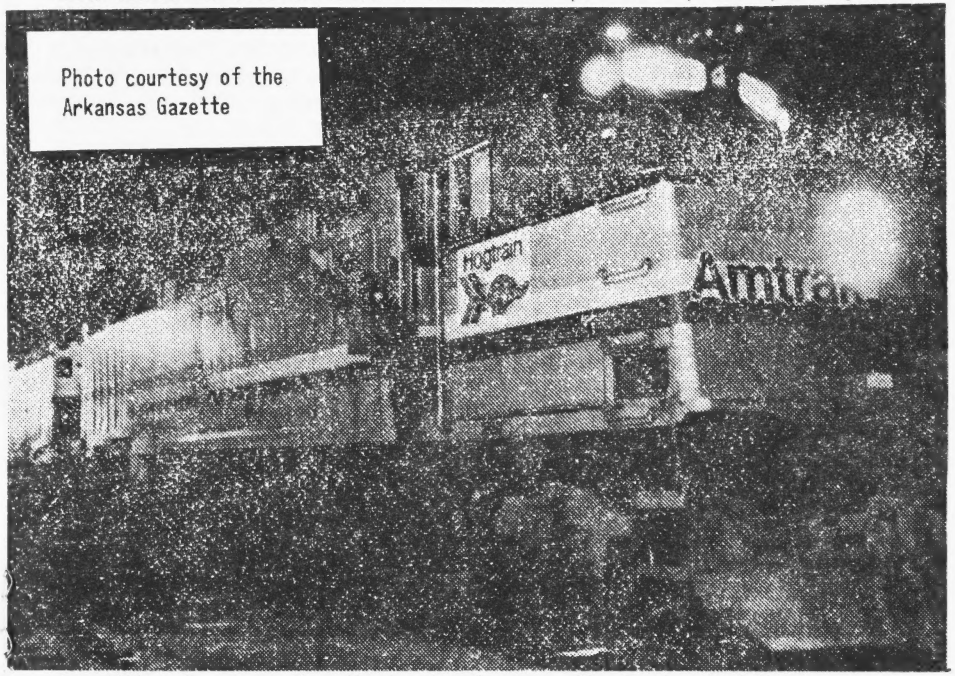


Photo courtesy of the Arkansas Gazette

in additional revenue from the two Amcafe cars. The front end of the baggage car was used for storage of extra food and drink, and was well-guarded and handled by Tony Cermak of the St. Louis Amtrak Commissary. The on-board group furnished by Amtrak were top-notch young people who worked hard and all anjoyed the trip as much as the fans did.

The Bald Knob to Memphis MoPac line is a beautiful and well-maintained line, as is all MoPac main and secondary line trackage. Equipped with CTC and welded rail (115-lb and above), it road like a dream, especially in car "Cynthia", where the vestibule was to the rear and a full moon could be enjoyed all night, along with the huge Hogtrain tail gate sign gracing the rear gate. Besides the 525 Arkansas Razorback supporters, at least a dozen railfans from as far away as Fort Worth came to Little Rock to ride the special train.

I am as disappointed as anyone could be over the loss of the trains last October. However, this event, along with other signs I have seen in the Amtrak organization, gives me new hope for the future of rail passenger travel.

BOSTON COMMUTER RAIL EXPANDS NORTH & WEST

by Peter Roehm

As 1979 closed out and 1980 opened up, the Boston/MBTA/B&M commuter rail system was flexing its muscles and beginning to go in directions long hoped for but until recently only dreamed of. On Dec 17 service was returned after a 4-year absence to Haverhill and Lawrence, but this time using the line thru Reading to Wilmington Junction rather than the former operation over the New Hampshire Division mainline thru Winchester. As of now five trains operate each way weekdays only with weekend service scheduled for later in the year. Besides stopping at the above two locations, trains also serve Bradford, Ballardvale, Shawsheen Village, Andover, and North Wilmington. North Andover is expected back after its town meeting votes to do so--four years ago the town meeting had voted to withdraw from the service, and under law the service cannot be reinstated until the town reverses its decision.

On Jan 13 service returned to the north central Massachusetts communities of Fitchburg and Gardner after an absence of 15 and 20 years respectively. The inaugural run for this service drew crowds far and beyond anything imagined by its sponsors.

This special train departed North Station on Saturday, Jan 12 with F40PH engine 1009 pulling four of the new Pullman coaches--320, 309, 321 and control car 1302. On board at the beginning were numerous state legislators and transportation officials as well as consumer rail advocates and enthusiasts. A few from the general public managed to get aboard following an article in the Boston Herald inviting them, but MBTA Special Assistant for Communications Mila Dixon denied that the public was to be invited.

The first outbound stop was at Waltham, where Mayor Arthur Clark cut the ribbon on a new outbound station platform that has resulted in a lessening of the town's traffic problems at nearby grade crossings. From here it was on to Concord and then to South Acton (present terminus of the service) to recognize Senator Chet Atkins for his role in securing state funds for this commuter rail service extension.

Next--Littleton, which is the station for the I-495 belt expressway, and altho neither a member of the MBTA or the Montachusetts Regional T/A, is receiving the service as this experimental period is 100% state-funded. The passenger tally began to increase here, thanks to the excellent publicity of the MRTA.

More passengers boarded at Ayer and North Leominster, and the train was now standing room only, and once the Fitchburg crowd got on, the 396-seat train was handling no fewer than 775 passengers to Gardner.

Someone from radio station WEIM in Fitchburg commented that earlier that morning their phones were flooded with calls asking about the train's departure time for Gardner. Everyone wanted to ride it, and they did and brought along every small child they could find. Gene Skoropowski--RTN reader, NARP director, and Manager of Planning and Operations for the MBTA Commuter Rail--told the riders via the intercom that the "T" was jubilantly overwhelmed by the massive outpouring of people and hoped that they would be back as paying passengers. Many have come back. The first day of revenue service saw 235 passengers, and the following day--a Monday and the first commutation day--brought 150. It is understood that patronage is holding very well on these trains, and that is what will be required to maintain the service beyond the funding termination date in June.

In both Fitchburg and Gardner the Administrator of the Montachusetts RTA, Mohammed Kahn, welcomed all of the dignitaries on hand to do their usual thing at such a gathering. Senator Atkins emphasized that he hopes that the service can average in the 200's to 300 passengers daily, as it would then make it easier for him to get funds for its continuance past June 30.

The special returned to Boston practically on time, and all aboard considered the response beyond their wildest dreams and expectations. Enroute inbound there was almost a major disaster at Concord, as the train had stopped to detrain a few passengers, and no sooner were the passengers beginning to detrain than a 7-unit freight barreled thru between the train and the station, narrowly missing at least two people already on the ground who, hearing the oncoming locomotive's horn, leaped aside. A tremendous day was almost stained beyond repair.

Service to Fitchburg and Gardner is seven days a week, with a minimum two trains each day, and the one-way fare to Fitchburg is $3 and to Gardner $3.50.

No sooner has this service begun than the third new service in two months is to begin on Jan 28, between Boston and northern New Hampshire via Lowell MA, Nashua, Manchester, and Concord NH. A special inaugural run was set for Jan 25--off-limits to all but a select few, as DOT Secretary Neil Goldschmidt is to be on board, and the MBTA/NHTA does not wish to have the public and its consumer reps aboard. During that trip, the few riders will have displayed for them at Nashua NH an SPV-2000 and a new British Leyland Light Experimental Vehicle (LEV) which, to be blunt, is simply a railbus. There will be two roundtrips on weekdays originating in Concord and one roundtrip each Saturday and Sunday also originating in Concord. This means one cannot make a one-day roundtrip from Boston, ruling out recreational travel to New Hampshire unless one stays the weekend. One of the daily trips will be with new Pullmans, and the other the SPV-2000 which is on a temporary lease from the Budd Company.

In the spring the Haverhill line will be extended to Rosemont, another stop on the I-495 Beltway; later in the year to Methuen and Route 213 on the old M&L Branch; there is increased talk of Worcester beyond whatever the new Inland Route 403-b operation brings, as well as a day train to Pittsfield using LAKE SHORE LIMITED equipment on layover; also Dover NH and Portland ME by late 1980 or early 1981.

Mixed Train of Thoughts

THE EMPIRE BUILDER struck a buffalo on its eastbound run on Jan 20 at about 6pm a mile west of Culbertson MT, in extreme eastern Montana, between the stations of Wolf Point MT and Williston ND. The buffalo was one of five in a pen that had strayed out onto the BN track. The Superliner-equipped train developed flat spots on wheels of two cars and had to proceed at 40mph to Minneapolis/St. Paul, where the two cars were removed from the train. The train lost about 3 hours' time.....

A FEDERAL JUDGE on Jan 15 ordered the Southern Pacific to let Amtrak place two observers in the cab of its locomotives on the SUNSET LIMITED to note the causes of continuing delays to the train. This court action came about because the SP had refused to allow more than one observer in the cabs, opposing the addition of a second observer on the grounds of safety and company policy. Amtrak attorneys noted that SP had previously allowed two observers on Amtrak locomotives, and they rebutted the safety argument with an affidavit from a senior FRA official stating that safety of operations would probably be enhanced with a second man present. Departing from normal procedure, Judge John Penn traveled to Washington Union Station to view an Amtrak locomotive before deciding the issue. He was the same judge who issued the temporary restraining order against SP just before Christmas requiring the railroad to give passenger trains priority over freights. A formal hearing is still set for Feb 4.....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER'S ridership dropped off 14.1% in October and 15.6% in November (see page 20) after introduction of Superliner cars. Some Amtrak officials

were puzzled by this at first until they realized that the train is running tri-weekly now but was running four times a week in the comparison months of 1978. Thus there has been a 25% reduction in number of trains operating on the route.....

THE BULLET TRAIN comments by Amtrak's Alan Boyd, published in this issue, are no idle talk. Amtrak wasted no time in beginning to push for the construction of new rail lines in important corridors that might rival the Japanese model. Amtrak's Fletcher Prouty told the media in Southern California in mid-January that the U.S. ought to bring Shinkansen technology to the Los Angeles-San Diego route. Congressman Lionel Van Deerlin of San Diego began congressional hearings on such a plan on Jan 14. He has proposed a "southwest coast corridor" bill, co-authored byCongressmen James Corman and Jerry Patterson, to grant Amtrak $100 million to cut the running time on the SAN DIEGAN route to one hour, 55 minutes. The bill appears to have come about because Santa Fe refuses to allow a seventh SAN DIEGAN on its rails, claiming that the line is saturated, and freights will be interfered with. That question may go to a national arbitration panel, but Amtrak agrees with Japanese engineers that a totally new track on the route would be best, separating the passenger trains from the freight. Santa Fe estimates the cost of nes right-of-way at $1 million per mile, including land acquisition. Van Deerlin's bill would seem to provide enough funds to cover that. The bill also would extend service as far north as Oxnard. Testifying on the first day of hearings, Caltrans director Adriana Gianturco backed the building of a 508-mile corridor between San Diego and Sacramento by 1990, at a cost of over $1 billion. In the first three years, the SAN DIEGAN line would be rebuilt at a cost of $200 million. After that, the construction of a tunnel thru the Tehachapi Mountains and straightening of track would be done, permitting 110mph speeds on the long corridor. The U.S. DOT has retained a JNR official, Tatsuya Ishihara, who says it would be 7 or 8 times more expensive to mix freight and passengers on the same line than to build a whole new track.....

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FEBRUARY 3 SCHEDULE changes will not include alterations in the PACIFIC INTERNATIONAL and COAST STARLIGHT times, which will be delayed until April. Instead, Amtrak will run a guaranteed connecting bus from Vancouver B.C., leaving at 7am, to the southbound COAST STARLIGHT at Seattle, reaching there at 10:45. The bus will be all-reserved seating. Turning, the bus will receive passengers from the northbound MOUNT RAINIER and will run (with unreserved seating) back to Vancouver. Amtrak will issue a new nationwide timetable for the Feb 3 changes.....

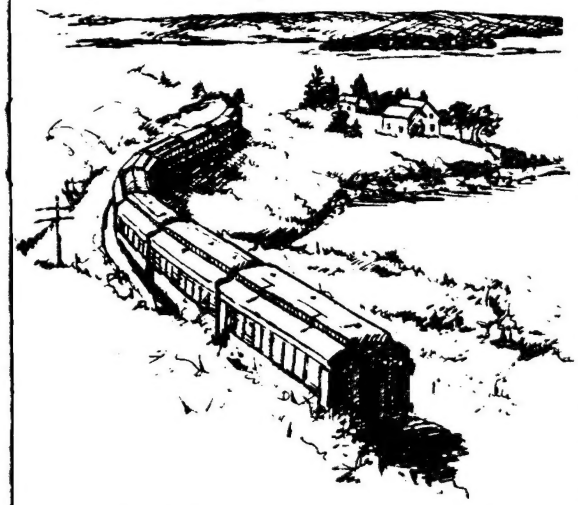
SECOND SAN JOAQUIN begins operation Feb 3. The schedule was given last issue. The official inaugural train, however, runs on Feb 4, leaving Oakland with three extra cars and going to Bakersfield and return. We'll have the complete report in the next issue of RTN.....

BOARD OF DIRECTORS meeting of Amtrak of Jan 30 has a number of items on the agenda in addition to the acquisition of SR cars and HEP conversion of Hi-level cars mentioned elsewhere in this issue. Other items are: purchase of lightweight electric locomotives, conversion of 5 Amdinettes to Lounge/Dinettes, on-board electronic hot bearing detector system, facility and right-of-way improvements on the Harrisburg line, reconstruction of 58th Street bridge, Philadelphia, supplemental funding to establish the Chicago to Indianapolis service, modernization of Beech Grove phase IV, Michigan track upgrading phase IV, phase IV modernization of Chicago 12th & 16th St. Yards, Seattle commissary rehabilitation, and others.....

COMMISSARY-WAREHOUSE CONSTRUCTION in Chicago has been approved by Amtrak, at a cost of $6. Amtrak announced on Jan 11 approval by the Board of Directors of this part of the $40.6 million modernization program of the 12th and 16th Street Yards in Chicago. The program began in 1977 and is scheduled for completion in 1981. Construction will begin this spring, and when it is completed in mid-1981, all commissary functions and material storage facilities will be consolidated at the 12th Street Yards.....

AMTRAK AEM-7 LOCOMOTIVE had its first test run in the NE Corridor on Jan 23--it arrived the previous weekend. Using only two of its four traction motors, the new unit ran up to 92mph pulling a test car and 4 or 5 Amfleet cars.....

THE CHARMING SCENE below is pictured on the front of the informal menu of the Adirondack Railway. Dinner selections on the menu include Beef Bourgignon, Beef Roulade, Stuffed Flounder, and Chicken Croquets, with prices ranging from $8.95 to $11.95. Dinner includes baked or rissole potato and green beans almandine. Reader Mark Lazur sends us the consist of the first regular run of the ADIRONDACK NORTH STAR (Jan 4). It had engines 29 (RS3), Conrail 9948 (Dewitt Geep), N&W heater car 1368; cars parlor car 80, coach 68, coach 1729 (P-70), tavern-recreation car 92, coach number unknown, and coach 73.....



THE PANAMA LIMITED, train 58, derailed in Chicago at 3:45pm on Dec 17. The train was westbound on the St. Charles Air Line when the last two cars derailed, just before crossing the Rock Island diamonds. The lead truck on the last car then caught on the cross tracks and snapped away while half the car was dragged across it. After 55 minutes, the train continued on. The two derailed cars were cleared away by 7pm, and Rock Island commuter service was suspended until then. Consist of the train was P30 engines 722 & 711; cars 1216, slpr "Pine Rapids", Amdinette 20221 & Amcoaches 21853, 21878, 21824, & 21872.....

A BOMB THREAT on board the NIGHT OWL, train 67, caused the train to be delayed a half hour at Washington DC on Jan 10 while it was searched.....

HEAVY RAIN STORMS in early January in Southern California caused flooding on the Santa Fe Railway near San Juan Capistrano. On Jan 11 the SAN DIEGANS were being delayed about 30 minutes by track conditions.....

MOPAC FREIGHT DERAILMENT between St. Louis and Poplar Bluff caused the INTER-AMERICAN, train 21, to detour from St. Louis to Poplar Bluff via the Cotton Belt to Dexter, thence back on the MoPac to Poplar Bluff. The train missed no stops, but was delayed 2 hours. The eastbound train was apparently affected also.....

THE HOUSTON SECTION of the INTER-AMERICAN, train 23, was delayed 2½ hours leaving Temple TX on Jan 11 due to engine failure. The engine from train 22 was turned to take train 23 to Houston.....

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TWO LRC TRAINS to be leased by Amtrak will be coming soon. With the trains back in production after a strike at the Canadian manufacturer, the first trainset is expected to be delivered in mid-March and the second at the end of April. Each set consists of a diesel locomotive, four coaches and a coach-food service car.....

THE UNION PACIFIC and the Missouri Pacific announced on Jan 8 that they have reached a tentative agreement to merge, making the nation's third largest railroad. The ICC and stockholders must still approve the plan.....

AMTRAK VICE PRESIDENT-Government Affairs Lawrence D. Gilson on Jan 28 told a group that the cities and states must be challenged to come up with plans for development of stations. He said Amtrak is ready to collaborate with cities on intermodal plans that will make downtowns more attractive.....

AMTRAK CAR 8353, former "Travellers Rest" car, was burned in Pasco WA by transients while it sat on the rip track. Dome coach 9461 and sleeper "Placid Vale" are also sitting unused in the same location.....

CANADA'S PIERRE TRUDEAU has called for double-tracking of the CN between Winnipeg and Vancouver. The NDP party has called for electrification of rail lines.....

THE FEDERAL BUDGET just published gives Amtrak a better shake than it's had in the past. Capital spending is set at $240 million in fiscal 1981, compared with $190 million in the present fiscal year, and will be $148 million in fiscal 1982. In fiscal 1981 Amtrak operating subsidies would go up 3% to $650 million, and Amtrak will be asked to raise fares to recover more money from users. The highway budget in fiscal 1981 is up 4%, to $7.86 billion.....

THE RIO GRANDE'S Winter Park Ski Train runs weekends between Jan 5 and Mar 30, leaving Denver Saturdays and Sundays at 7:35am and leaving Winter Park at 6:15pm. Incidentally, the Colorado RR Museum is planning an authoritative book on Denver Union Station, and is asking for any historical material on the station and its predecessors. If you can help, contact the museum at PO Box 10, Golden CO 80201, or telephone 279-4591.....

AMTRAK SKI TRAINS have been planned between Chicago and Dubuque on the BLACK HAWK route, to run Jan 25 & 27, Feb 8 & 10, and Feb 29 & Mar 2. Passengers will be handled to Dubuque in extra equipment on regular train 371 on Friday evening and special trains will leave Dubuque Sunday evening at 4:30pm, arriving Chicago at 9pm. Proposed consist for the trains is one F40 engine, one Amcafe and four Amcoaches.....

THE "PRINCESS MARGUERITE" between Seattle and Victoria may or may not run this season--the British Columbia government refuses to comment to newsmen on the matter. The business community in Victoria feels it will run again, but the season begins Apr 30 and the ship will need six weeks in the shipyards beforehand.....

THE EMPIRE BUILDER detoured via Wenatchee WA on Jan 24 after a chemical tank car derailment the previous day on the BN between Ellensburg and Yakima WA.....

THE COAST STARLIGHT, PIONEER, and MOUNT RAINIER were all affected by a derailment on BN at Ridgefield WA in mid-January, and a female brakeperson died of fumes emitted by a derailed freight car. Residents of the area were evacuated the day of the derailment, and once more later when the leaking tank car was moved away. Amtrak passengers were bused around the derailment scene.....

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GRAND TRUNK WESTERN filed a motion to dismiss the application of the Magner-O'Hara Scenic Railway between Detroit and Traverse City (see last issue, p. 17) because GTW already has a contract with Amtrak. Michigan rail passenger supporters see this as another GTW anti-passenger move. The railroad killed off the proposed Chicago-Toronto GREAT LAKES LIMITED a few years back, supporters recall--a route which seems a natural for high patronage.....

ANN ARBOR RAILROAD and the state of Michigan had planned a Snow train for the first weekend of January--a package deal including motels, ski passes and snowmobile safari. The equipment was to be from Steamtown Vermont with a VIA steam generator and flat car for snowmobiles. The project was cancelled when only half of the train was booked. The extra-mild winter was the major culprit--no snow.....

THE INTER-AMERICAN is the subject of an advertising campaign--not only by its active local supporters--especially in Little Rock--but also by Amtrak. Amtrak has an advertising card out printed in bright yellow with the train's route map shown. The new Amtrak "America's getting into training" appears on it. Newspaper ads have appeared with a cartoon-type route map shown. "In the long run, it pays to get into training" reads the ad caption. And Amtrak tells editors about the train's ridership gains since last Oct 1, when the cutbacks took effect. In the first month, the I-A's ridership increase was 67.7%, compared with a systemwide Amtrak gain of 6.9%. Since the train now has an extra leg that runs between Temple TX and Houston,

it covers a portion of the route of the discontinued LONE STAR.....

THE BROADWAY LIMITED will apparently not get its electrified cars until April 1, when all three sets will be placed in service simultaneously. And the LAKE SHORE LIMITED won't see its first "cafeteria-lounge car" (car 3100) until Feb 15.....

CANADIAN CAR MANUFACTURER Bombardier borrowed two RTA/ICG Highliner cars on Dec 7 and ran a special train from Chicago to Michigan City IN and return over the South Shore. Local civic leaders, transportation department officials, state legislators were on board. Bombardier was making a pitch for the new South Shore order which is to be awarded in 1980. Cars used were Highliners 1640 and 1647.....

THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST snowstorm that saw the PIONEER used as a rescue train (see last issue) cut the Union Pacific's traffic to two freight roundtrips a day--plus the PIONEER. At Hood River, Oregon there were 40 inches of snow on the ground at one time. OreARP's Ken McFarling reports leaving Eugene on Jan 9 after attending a Willamette Valley rail committee meeting, and it was only 43° upon departure, but Portland was clad in ice. Despite a lengthy delay to thaw a switch at Willsburg Junction, the COAST STARLIGHT reached Portland 10 minutes early. And there stood the eastbound PIONEER, due to have left over two hours earlier. At least a part of its delay was for taking on relief supplies for stormbound Cascade Locks and Hood River. Mayor Connie McCready of Portland wired DOT Secretary Goldschmidt as follows: "I'm convinced more lives would have been lost without Amtrak. Amtrak has rescued stranded motorists, carried medical assistance to the sick, made unscheduled stops in Cascade Locks, Bonneville, Dodson and Warrendale to pick up people, and delivered snow-blowers to Hood River, where they've been needed desperately." The PIONEER was one of the trains originally planned to be dropped from the system. Now it's in on two years' probation.....

★ ★ ★

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION judge will rule in about two months on Los Angeles County's bid to run a commuter train between Los Angeles and Oxnard. Hearings on the plan ended on Jan 22, running since last July.....

UMTA HAS APPROVED funding of $600,000 for an elevated retail store concourse which will connect a planned people-mover station in downtown Los Angeles with office and commercial buildings in the area.....

STATE OF WISCONSIN on Jan 22 received permission from a federal judge to buy up branch lines of the bankrupt Milwaukee Road which it wants.....

THE LEAD ARTICLE of the New York Times travel section for Jan 20 was an article by a high school junior--Hal P. Fiske of Weston MA, who wrote "Seeing India in 'Hard Class' Aboard a Railway Coach".....

THE LONG ISLAND Rail Road could be hit by a strike again on Feb 13, when the present cooling-off period ends.....

NEW YORK CITY'S Committee for Better Transit reports that the state's DOT is holding talks with Amtrak on the possibilities of its taking over the Westchester-Putnam commuter service from Conrail.....

THE SUFFOLK COUNTY, Long Island legislature has granted $75,000 to railfans who will restore Long Island Rail Road steam engine #39. The loco will be used for tourist excursions on Long Island. It was built in 1929 and has been on a museum lawn since 1956. Author Ron Ziel is a project spokesman.....

THE SAN FRANCISCO Public Utilities Commission on Jan 29 approved a fare increase for the Muni Railway. Regular fares will go from 25¢ to 50¢ at peak hours and to 30¢ at other times. Senior citizen and student fares go from 5¢ to 10¢. The plan is expected to increase the Muni's funding by $60 million.....

THE SOUTHERN PACIFIC will receive $3.75 million from the federal government to pay for damages caused by a bomb train explosion in the SP's Roseville CA yards in 1973. The out-of-court settlement was announced Jan 29.....

THE LOU GRANT television show on Jan 28 included a scene in L.A. Union Station with actors waiting to board a train to San Francisco. No trains were shown.....

IT COSTS AMTRAK an average of $1000 for alternate transportation each time the SUNSET LIMITED arrives late in Los Angeles if the STARLIGHT isn't held.....

LATEST AMTRAK RIDERSHIP FIGURES

	OCT 1979		NOV 1979	
Metroliners	148,753	-1.4	154,556	-3.3
NE Corr Conventional	433,052	8.0	449,457	- .2
New Haven-Springfld	27,315	11.3	27,064	-1.1
NY-Philadelphia	206,996	4.9	206,393	2.9
Phila-Harrisburg	94,129	19.4	89,240	7.7
NY-Harrisburg	16,409	-7.6	18,613	8.6
NY-Niagara Falls	54,963	19.4	56,554	1.9
Chicago-St. Louis	9,947	23.0	10,160	2.4
Chicago-Milwaukee	26,517	15.5	27,018	8.6
Chicago-Detroit	34,226	2.4	35,329	-9.1
Chicago-Carbondale	13,652	2.3	15,302	4.3
Chicago-Quincy	9,221	18.6	9,667	13.8
L.A.-San Diego	80,538	43.8	85,058	42.7
Portland-Vancouver	11,314	-13.3	14,331	-5.3
Washington-Cincinnati	6,747	34.7	7,374	55.4
Wash.-Martinsburg	25,488	4.1	20,780	-1.0
Oakland-Bakersfield	4,267	- .7	5,673	-5.5
New York-Montreal	9,873	12.5	10,211	25.5
Chicago-Port Huron	6,585	-1.6	8,360	-3.0
Chicago-Dubuque	4,384	9.0	4,347	-15.9
Chicago-Duluth	10,254	- .2	8,364	2.1
Chicago-Valparaiso	2,482	--	16,250	--
Chicago-Kansas City	9,346	52.5	10,176	29.3
Washington-Montreal	30,889	13.8	32,579	14.4
New York-Florida	43,082	-1.4	50,076	-14.7
Chicago-NY/Washington	17,745	25.1	18,220	4.6
Chicago-Cincinnati/DC	8,506	9.7	10,042	7.6
Chicago-Seattle	11,912	-14.1	13,556	-15.6
Chicago-S.F./L.A.*	20,671	12.1	33,367	60.5
Chicago-Los Angeles	21,587	13.1	20,839	-4.3
Chicago-New Orleans	15,959	7.9	17,744	1.0
Chicago-Texas	14,375	67.7	15,363	39.5
L.A.-New Orleans	6,218	2.1	6,181	-8.0
L.A.-Seattle	34,316	10.0	38,888	0.0
Chicago-NY/Boston	18,638	-13.9	21,751	-12.8
Boston-Newport News	50,298	5.8	57,301	-2.2
New York-Savannah	31,203	5.4	33,016	3.2
Seattle-Salt Lake	10,630	1.6	13,230	-7.0
NY-New Orleans	16,050	--	18,956	--

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR plus DESERT WIND

Amtrak released the October '79 and November '70 ridership figures simultaneously this month; we received them on Jan 26.

The first column gives the number of riders, while the second column is the percentage of increase from the same month of 1978.

Ridership of special trains in Oct totalled 17,628--an increase of 123.6%; there were 2,330 riders on discontinued routes in Oct (as some trains continued for awhile beyond the official discontinuance date). The Oct system total ridership was 1,618,495--an increase of 6.9% over Oct 1978. NE Corridor ridership was up 6.5%--to 926,-654; short distance routes were up 18.3%--to 319,804; and long distance ridership increased by 12.1%--to 352,079.

In Nov, the system total was 1,692,704 for a 1% increase. This small increase, plus the moderate one in Oct were (as Amtrak noted) a result of discontinuance of 5 routes. In Nov 1978 61,882 people rode the discontinued routes; if they had not been discontinued and the same number had ridden in Nov 1979, the systemwide increase would have been at least 4.7%. Similarly, the Oct increase would have been at least 10.1%, since 51,531 people rode the now-discontinued routes in Oct 1978.

In Nov 1979 special train ridership was 1,318, for a decrease of 36.2%. NE Corridor ridership was up 0.7%, to 945,323; short distance was up 16.2%, to 344,954; and long distance was up 6.5%, to 401,109. Note that Amtrak has lumped the ridership figures of the SF ZEPHYR and the new DESERT WIND together in one figure.

CARS AND CONSISTS

*SAN FRANCISCO ZEPHYR, train 5, Ogden Jan 3: engines UP 8074, Atk 621 & 628; cars 1242, 1551, 5668, 5414, dome 9450, 5667, dome 9457 "Silver Buckle", 3353, 8072, 2681, 2753 "Palm Leaf", 2204 "Silver Pelican", 1221 baggage to Reno.

*SOUTHWEST LIMITED, train 4, Kansas City Jan 18: engines 527, 515, 528; cars deadheads 4542 & 4893; 1210, 1217, 1570, 9917, 9963, 9973, 9981, 9914, 2626 "Pacific Plateau", 2555 "Steel City", deadheads 8301 observation, 1259 baggage.

*PANAMA LIMITED, train 59, Hammond LA Dec 27: engines 720, 710, 712 (P30's); cars 1260, 2982, 20208, 21856, 21834, 21203, 20127, 21108, 21151, 21873.

*LAKE SHORE LIMITED, train 48, Albany-Rensselaer Jan 15: engines 710 (P30), 298 & 320 (F40's); cars 1248, 1610, 2052, 2980 "Pine Creek", 8501, 20029, 4622, 4604, 4615, 4609, 4610, 2880, deadhead to Albany 4611. Same, South Bend IN Jan 19: engines two F40's nos. unknown; cars 1611, 2051, 2884 (just out of Beech Grove), 8504, 20012, 4614, 4624, 4602, 4610, 4623, 2880, 1154 mail.

*ANN RUTLEDGE, train 301, Jan 19: engine 245 (F40); cars 21824, 21245, Amdinette 20203. West of River Junction MO train 301 pushed a MoPac freight having engine troubles over hill to first siding, with 45-min delay. Freight consisted of MoPac SD40 unit & GP 38-2 unit, 44 misc. freight cars and MoPac caboose.

RAIL FANTRIPS

Feb 9: Rail-bus trip New York (GCT) to Old Deerfield Village, restored colonial community; dinner at Wiggin's Tavern, Northampton MA. $35 incl dinner. Order by Feb 4. RR Enthusiasts, NY Div., Box A-1353, G.C.Sta., New York NY 10017.

Apr 20-26: Nevada holiday tour, S.F. area to Reno, Carson City, Virginia City, Las Vegas, Hoover Dam, return via L.A. $490 & up. Incl hotels & some meals. Great Western Tours, 639 Market St, San Francisco CA 94105. (415) 398-2994.

Jun 14, Jul 5 & 26, Aug 16, Sep 27, Oct 18, Nov 8, Dec 6: Departures for Mexico train tours from L.A. 2-week tour $975. Deductions for those outside L.A. R.T. Peck, Drawer 72, Whittier CA 90608. (213) 945-2678.

One Rail Fantrips listing is free. Send full info to: RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Fantrips Dept, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

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TRAIN RATINGS

See our last issue for a train rating form. Our regular rating surveys are resuming, and results from the most recent survey will be published soon in RTN. Do not use old forms, as some of the categories have been changed.

BACK ISSUES

The full year 1979 is now available--Volume 9, 15 issues of RTN all in one parcel for just $5.50 postpd, no tax. Also: 1978 $5.50; 1977 (22 issues) $7. RTN, PO Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

QUOTES OF THE WEEK***

"The railroad station at Billings, Mont., is old, clean, wooden, and deathly quiet, except when the long coal trains roll past along Montana Avenue. A passenger train used to come through Billings on the run between Chicago and Seattle. But the North Coast Hiawatha is dead now, been dead since October--the victim of a head-on collision with a thundering herd of numbers, statistics cooked up at Amtrak headquarters in Washington to justify killing off some trains."

--Phil Primack in The Washington Post, Dec 23, 1979.

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TRANS-ACTION: RTN-format news magazine on rail and transit in Canada (and some U.S. news). Order now for $10 per year, with Transport 2000 membership (NARP members only, $5), from: Transport 2000, Box 300, Sta. "A", Ottawa, Ontario, K1N 8V3, Canada.

TIMETABLES from Canada: Send $1 to Box 300, Sta. "A", Ottawa, Ont. K1N 8V3, Canada for unique, never-issued VIA system folder and other info.

TROLLEY TRAILS THROUGH THE WEST, Vol. 7 - Northern California $4. Back issues $3 each (Vols 1-Yakima, 2-Seattle, 3-Portland, 4-Tacoma/Spokane, 5-Montana/Utah, 6-Western Canada). Moneyback guarantee. Wilson Bros. Publications, Box 712rtn, Yakima WA 98907.

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RTN ADVERTISING RATES: Express Ads $1 per line of 80 spaces. Display ads only $1.25 per square inch. RAIL TRAVEL NEWS, Box 9007, Berkeley CA 94709.

BOOKS

The first photo we recall seeing of the former Canadian Pacific rail-steamer connection at Arrowhead, B.C., on the Arrow Lakes, is in the latest (fourth) volume of CANADIAN PACIFIC IN THE ROCKIES, by D. M. Bain, published by the BRMNA (British Railway Modellers of North America). Each of the four volumes is 28 pages long, with one large photo per page on slick paper, and very interesting and informative notes and captions. Each volume covers a range of subject matter, from steam days to present times. Photos and reproduction are highly professional. The photos are by CP special photographer Nick Morant. There are breathtaking scenes in these books that help remind us that rail is a very special way of travel. Will Mr. Bain ever switch to a different topic? Perhaps, he says, once he exhausts the present topic. Vols. 1 & 2 cost $3.50 each, 3 & 4 are $4 each, from BRMNA, 5124 33 St. N.W., Calgary, Alberta, T2L 1V4, Canada.

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